

Administrator's Update for 1/21/15

By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

At their recent meeting, the West Coast Inland Navigation District (WCIND) Board approved our request for funds for work at Stump Pass. The funding, not to exceed \$20,000, will be used for anchors, buoys, chains and installation, the removal of wooden pilings, and installation of a light tower. Charlotte County appreciates the WCIND's continued support of the regionally-important efforts going on at Stump Pass, an important environmental area.

Edgewater Drive Phase 2

There will be a public information meeting next Tuesday regarding the Edgewater Drive Phase 2 Improvements project. This project will affect Edgewater Drive roadway and three bridges between Harbor and Midway Boulevards, and include road closures. The meeting will be from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Jan. 27 at the Port Charlotte Beach Complex, 4500 Harbor Boulevard, Port Charlotte. Charlotte County staff and project stakeholders will be available to answer questions, about construction schedule, affected areas, and more.

A website has been set up to keep residents up to date on the project as it progresses. Visit GoEP2.com to view maps and other information, and to sign up for project newsletters and receive traffic updates via text.

Home solicitations

Last week I discussed unlicensed contractors. Unfortunately there are also a few unscrupulous licensed contractors, targeting seasonal and elderly residents with home solicitations. Cold calls that tout air conditioning checkups or duct inspections for a low price such as \$29.95 can be a trap. Rarely does a homeowner come out of this without the service person finding major problems that did not seem to exist prior to the low-cost service check.

Beware if the price quoted to you to fix the problems is good only for one day. Another tactic used is to stay at a homeowner's residence, wearing them down for three to four hours until they finally sign the contract. Don't be a victim—if you happen to get a salesperson that is using high pressure sales tactics and won't leave your property until you sign a contract, tell them if they will not leave you will call the Sheriff's Office. Call if they do not leave.

If you sign a contract due to a home solicitation, you do have rights under Florida Law. If you purchase goods or services during the course of a "home solicitation sale," you maintain a three-day right to cancel. A sale is considered a "home solicitation sale" if it takes place in your home, or at a location which is not the main or permanent place of business of the seller, with a purchase price more than \$25. There are certain exceptions to these general rules. If you are in doubt as to whether you have the right to cancel, contact the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at 850-488-2221 or 800-435-7352.

The law requires both a seller of future consumer services and a home solicitation seller to provide written notice of a buyer's cancellation rights at the time of the sale. In the case of a sale of future services, the notice of cancellation rights must appear immediately next to the space for the buyer's signature on the contract. Every home solicitation seller is also required to provide a written contract to the buyer which includes an explanation of the buyer's right to cancel.

A sale for future services can be cancelled by notifying the seller within three business days from the date the buyer signs the contract. There is no requirement that the notice be in writing,

however it is a better practice for the buyer to send written notice by certified mail. Refunds for cancelled contracts for future services must be received within twenty days after the seller receives the cancellation notice.

Cancellation of a home solicitation sale must be made in writing to the seller no later than midnight of the third business day after the contract date. If sent by mail, it must be postmarked by that same deadline. In the case of a home solicitation sale, a refund must be mailed within ten days after the sale has been cancelled. If you have any questions or concerns call the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

To protect yourself, obtain at least three estimates for any work that needs to be done. Remember that cheaper is not necessarily better. Hire locally—ask your friends and family for recommendations. To confirm that a contractor is properly licensed or if there are any complaints on file, please contact the Charlotte County Licensing Manager, Erin Mullen-Travis, by phone 941.623.1007 or email erin.mullen-travis@charlottecountyfl.gov.